

**Intervention delivered by Emre Özaltın, Program Leader (Human Development), Mozambique, Madagascar, Mauritius, Comoros, Seychelles, World Bank Group**

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I will speak briefly on the multi-partner collaboration supporting the Social Protection response to the COVID-19 crisis in Mozambique.

Cash transfers, are not only one of the most impactful tools we have in development, they are particularly well suited to respond to this crisis, by mitigating economic impacts on the most vulnerable and supporting adherence to quarantine and social distancing measures.

Countries are increasingly recognizing this and without doubt, COVID-19 has accelerated the SPJ agenda. For us at the World Bank, country demand has meant 10.5 billion dollars of in new financing for SPJ globally of which 3.6 billion dollars is in Africa.

In Mozambique, where half of the population is poor, we estimate that the pandemic risks pushing an additional 10% into poverty, with effects felt mostly in urban areas.

So, in the wake of the crisis, the ILO, WFP, Unicef, Sweden, DfID, World Bank, and other key partners quickly came together to coordinate our financing and technical assistance. We produced a joint strategy and technical note which then became the basis of our support to the Government of Mozambique to prepare its social protection response plan.

With this support, the Mozambique government is proposing, and has started implementing, one of the most ambitious cash transfer scale-ups in Africa

- Top ups to 600 thousand existing beneficiary households
- And a scale up to 1.1 Million new HHs, all in urban/periurban areas, corresponding to about half of the urban population in the country

The donor group has also supported key innovations, including

- Using multidimensional poverty measures and geospatial analysis for geographic prioritization and targeting;
- Facilitated bank accounts and digital payment transfers;
- And, for the first time, explicit coverage of households working in the informal sector.

As we move forward, key issues will be to ensure the sustainability of gains made and strengthening of national systems; continuously improving targeting mechanisms, as this is an area where the science has not kept up with our ambition; and finally. ensuring that the excellent collaboration achieved in response to COVID-19 continues in all our activities in the sector going forward.

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